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## **Legislation getting tough on methamphetamine producers signed by governor**

**Lansing** – Fines and penalties for the production of methamphetamine in Michigan will increase, Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp) announced today after her bill was one of seven signed into law by the governor dealing with the illegal drug.

Public Acts 307-313 provide more tools for law enforcement and impose stiffer penalties for those who participate in the production of methamphetamine by owning or possessing the places, chemicals or equipment used in production of the illegal stimulant.

“Methamphetamine is highly addictive and hurts not just the user, but also their families and the public,” Birkholz said. “These laws are intended to provide a greater deterrent to the production of this terrible drug, while protecting the public and emergency personnel from explosions, fires and other hazards associated with meth production.”

Methamphetamine is a growing concern throughout Michigan with clandestine labs being found in rural and city areas, barns, garages, apartments, storage areas and vehicles. The production of methamphetamine can cause serious environmental risks since the toxic waste produced often is dumped in public sewer systems or directly on the ground.

In addition to the contamination, production of meth can result in fires or explosions, injuring or killing law enforcement agents and fire personnel who respond to the scene of a meth lab.

Birkholz worked closely with local law enforcement, including Allegan County Prosecutor Fred Anderson, Allegan County Sheriff Blaine Koops, Allegan City Police Chief Rick Hoyer and Eaton County Sheriff Rick Jones, to develop this legislation.

(More)

The laws include provisions that:

- Prohibit the possession of more than 12 grams of pseudoephedrine (a chemical used in the production of methamphetamine) with the exception of pediatric products;
- Increase to 20 years imprisonment the maximum penalty for those owning or possessing the places, chemicals or equipment used in production of the illegal stimulant;
- Create a new crime with a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment for people who transport anhydrous ammonia in unapproved containers;
- Require inspection of property used as a clandestine lab for the production of methamphetamine to determine if there is contamination, and require public warnings if any is discovered.

“We made this crime a felony to give law enforcement agents and judges greater tools to deal with irresponsible citizens who are endangering others,” Birkholz said. “Homes where meth has been cooked are considered hazardous waste sites, so no one can live there and the homes can’t be sold. Stopping meth production and preventing contamination will benefit everyone.”

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